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Kabul 8° / -3°

Herat 11° / -4°



Nangarhar 16° / 4°

Balkh 8° / -2°

Heart of Asia

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Special Courts Established for Pension Payments

The leader of the Islamic Emirate issued an eight-article decree addressing the procedures for paying pensions to retirees.

Zabihullah Mujahid, spokesperson for the Islamic Emirate, stated that the leader of the Islamic Emirate has directed the Supreme Court to establish special courts to find a "solution" for pension payments based on Islamic Sharia and national law. Hamdullah Fitrat, deputy spokesperson for the Islamic Emirate, explained in detail that retirees should file their claims with the special courts. After a comprehensive review by the courts and verification... **P3**



Afghanistan Gradually Standing on Its Feet: IEA Spokesman

The Islamic Emirate's spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid says they are working to strengthen Afghanistan's economy through the implementation of major projects, and the country is gradually becoming self-sufficient. Mujahid stated that the start of projects like TAPI, Trans-Afghan, and CASA-1000 will create many good job opportunities.

"In general, other projects that have been planned are also being implemented. The CASA-1000 project will begin soon, and the Qosh Tepa project and other projects are already in progress," said Mujahid. "Gradually, Afghanistan is standing on its feet, and good job opportunities will be available for Afghans, which will have a positive impact on Afghanistan's economy," he stressed.

Meanwhile, some members of the private sector have stated that economic development will be... **P2**

Karzai: Afghanistan's Future Will Be Dark Without Girls' Education

Former Afghan President Hamid Karzai has stated that Afghan girls' demand for reopening schools and universities is their fundamental right. He emphasized that Afghanistan cannot have a bright future without educating its girls. In a post on his X account, Karzai wrote, "The demand and voice of the country's girls for education is a legitimate call and essential for a prosperous and developed Afghanistan."

He added, "Empowering youth (both girls and boys) is the only path to self-reliance, ending poverty, progress, and societal prosperity." Karzai expressed hope that the doors of girls' schools and universities would reopen soon. Political analyst Wali Mohammad also weighed in, stating that girls' education is vital for Afghanistan's development. He said, "A progressive and prosperous Afghanistan is only possible with educated women and men." He stressed that girls' education is not only essential for their personal growth but also for the economic and social advancement of society. He added, "We hope that the interim government will reopen



schools and universities for girls and provide opportunities for modern education in various fields for the youth."

Mohammad Haroon, a resident of Kabul, remarked that the strength and power of a country depend on an educated generation that includes both men and women.

He stated, "If we have educated sisters alongside educated men, Afghanistan can quickly compete with the world." He emphasized the importance of education, noting that it is not only crucial for personal development but also for social justice and equality. Human rights organizations and

global nations have repeatedly called for reopening educational pathways for girls. In this regard, the United Nations recently stated that educational restrictions have negative impacts on Afghanistan's progress and its relations with the international community.

Ministry: Afghanistan Rich in Nearly All Kinds of Precious Stones

The Ministry of Mines and Petroleum stated that Afghanistan, with its 120 types of precious and semi-precious stones, is considered one of the richest countries in the region.

According to Homayoun Afghan, the spokesperson of the ministry, most of these stones are found in the provinces of Kabul, Panjshir, Badakhshan, Laghman, Nuristan, and Kunar. He said that Afghanistan, except for diamonds, possesses all types of precious stones, including emeralds, rubies, and lapis lazuli. "There are 120 types of precious and semi-precious stones in the world... **P3**



G7 Envoys Urge National Dialogue for Lasting Stability in Afghanistan

Special Representatives of the Group of Seven (G7), including the European Union, have emphasized the importance of a national dialogue for achieving long-term stability in Afghanistan. Following a meeting on Afghanistan in Geneva, Switzerland, G7 special envoys issued a joint statement calling for the restoration of women's rights and urging the Islamic Emirate to fight terrorism. The representatives also expressed concern over the IEA's decision to ban girls from attending medical institutes, warning that it will have devastating consequences for the citizens, particularly mothers and their infants. The statement described this ban as unacceptable and called on the Afghan authorities to lift it



immediately. Earlier, countries and international organizations had called for the removal of restrictions on the education and employment of women and girls, emphasizing the need for a national dialogue. In response to these concerns, IEA has repeatedly stated that it will not allow interference in the internal

affairs of the country. The G7 special envoys also expressed their concern about the recent terrorist attacks in Kabul and the surrounding region, warning that terrorism remains a serious threat to Afghanistan's security. They confirmed the actions of the IEA against Daesh but stressed the need for more decisive measures.

Afghanistan...

difficult unless the country solves its electricity production problem.

They believe that if the government expands electricity production, investments in various sectors will increase, and the unemployment rate will decrease.

Sakhi Ahmad Payman, the first deputy of the Chamber of Industries and Mines, stated, "Distribution of land and energy for industrialists is one of our work priorities. It will be very beneficial and effective for sustainable employment and advancing Afghanistan's industry."

On the other hand, experts believe that Afghanistan has good potential in electricity production, and if the IEA can attract more investments in this area, the electricity shortage problem will be permanently solved, leading to significant growth in all sectors of the country's economy.

Putin Says...

would need to be re-elected for Moscow to consider him a legitimate signatory to any deal to ensure it was legally watertight, said Putin.

Putin dismissed the idea of agreeing a temporary truce with Kyiv, saying only a long-lasting peace deal with Ukraine would suffice.

Any talks should take as their starting point a preliminary agreement reached between Russian and Ukrainian negotiators in the early weeks of the war at talks in Istanbul, which was never implemented, he added.

Some Ukrainian politicians regard that draft deal as akin to a capitulation which would have neutered Ukraine's military and political ambitions.

By: Zhang Wanshi

China to impose visa restrictions on US officials as countermeasures over HK-related issues: Chinese FM

China has decided to impose visa restrictions on US personnel who have acted egregiously on Hong Kong-related issues, in accordance with the Law on Foreign Relations of the People's Republic of China and the Anti-Foreign Sanctions Law of the People's Republic of China, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said on Tuesday when she was asked about specific countermeasures in light of the US announcement to impose new visa restrictions on Hong Kong officials for implementing the National Security Law (NSL) for Hong Kong.

Washington said last month it would impose fresh sanctions on Hong Kong officials responsible for implementing the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR)'s national security law following the jailing of 45 people for subversion, according to RTHK, one of Hong Kong region's major broadcasters. In November, 45 people convicted of "conspiracy to subvert state power" were sentenced to terms of imprisonment ranging from 50 months to 10 years in Hong Kong. Mao said that China has made clear our serious position on relevant moves of the US side. The US used Hong Kong-related issues to slap visa restrictions on Chinese officials, which grossly interferes in China's internal affairs and seriously violates the principles of international law and the basic norms



of international relations, Mao added. In accordance with the Law on Foreign Relations of the People's Republic of China and the Anti-Foreign Sanctions Law of the People's Republic of China, China decided to impose visa restrictions on US personnel who have acted egregiously on Hong Kong-related issues, Mao said. Mao said that it must be stressed that Hong Kong is China's Hong Kong and Hong Kong affairs are purely China's internal affairs. We urge the US to earnestly respect China's sovereignty, respect Hong Kong's rule of law and stop meddling in Hong Kong affairs in

whatever form, Mao said.

China remains unwavering in its determination to safeguard the nation's sovereignty, security and development interests, to implement One Country, Two Systems, and to oppose any external interference in Hong Kong's affairs, Mao said. In a November press conference, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian said in response to US' taking steps to impose new visa restrictions on multiple Hong Kong officials that, China's central government firmly supports the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in safeguarding

national security and punishing various activities that endanger national security in accordance with law. Lin warned that if the US insists on imposing visa restrictions on Hong Kong officials, China will take firm countermeasures.

Washington played a detrimental role in exacerbating the riots in Hong Kong in 2019, actively fueling the unrest, and in a certain sense, the NSL for Hong Kong is specifically aimed at addressing the instigating actions by the external forces behind these disturbances, Lü Xiang, a research fellow at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, told the Global Times on Tuesday.

Since the implementation of the NSL in 2020, Hong Kong has emerged from the shadow of turmoil and is now at a crucial stage of recovery, he said. Therefore, any attempt by the US to undermine the security, stability, and development of Hong Kong at this time will be met with countermeasures from the Chinese side, Lü said.

The implementation of the NSL is currently at a critical juncture, with recent developments including the Jimmy Lai case and the verdict on the "35-plus" defendants, he added. The countermeasures from China convey the message that if the US obstructs its efforts to pursue peace and development in HKSAR, it will certainly respond with reciprocal actions, Lü noted.

By: Global Times

'The Harm Caused By US Military Base Contaminants is Terrible'

Pat Elder (Elder), an investigative reporter and director of the website Military Poisons, told the Global Times (GT) that toxic "forever chemicals," known as PFAS, or perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances, are flowing from US military bases across the US and in other countries where US bases are stationed and that they are contaminating the local environment and putting people's lives at risk. Elder has been investigating US military base contamination domestically and internationally for years. In an interview with GT reporter Wang Wenwen in her I-Talk show, Elder shared his findings. GT: In recent years, you have dedicated yourself to investigating contamination at US military bases, both domestically and internationally. What prompted you to start looking into this issue?

What harm does it cause?

Elder: In 2017, I attended a conference in Kaiserslautern, Germany, about military contamination. One of the panelists spoke about firefighting foam containing PFAS, a class of chemicals, that are probably carcinogenic and never break down. After the conference, I read a story in Military Times. The article was about why women were told "Don't get pregnant at George Air Force Base." Three hundred women reported horrible problems like, "I was at George Air Force Base. I drank the

water. I had a miscarriage, a stillbirth, and my child is mentally retarded." They think it was because of the PFAS. Since then, I've just been reading and writing about PFAS.

The harm caused by this contaminant is terrible. PFAS exposure lowers your ability to fight disease. It affects different people in different ways. This is a global issue.

We use social media to reach out to people, asking if they were involved in certain military occupational specialties (MOS). Certain MOS roles

are known to increase cancer risks. If you served in the military and did specific tasks, you're likely to develop cancer or become seriously ill. We're talking about tens of thousands of people.

GT: You have particularly looked into the military contamination at US bases in Japan. What did you find? What has been the reaction of the locals?

Elder: In Misawa, we found a pond that drains runoff from the Misawa Air Base. When we tested the water, we found 1,400 parts per trillion (ppt) of PFOS, a type of PFAS. In the US, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recommends drinking water has no more than 4 ppt of PFOS. In Japan, the limit is 50 ppt for both drinking water and river water. PFOS are especially significant because it... **P3**

Editorial

Preventing Traffic Accidents on the Kabul-Kandahar Highway: An Urgent Need to Protect Lives

The recent tragic traffic accident on the Kabul-Kandahar highway, which claimed the lives of many citizens, has deeply impacted every member of society. This incident is not just an isolated tragedy; it is a stark representation of the longstanding issues plaguing this vital route. The Kabul-Kandahar highway, considered a lifeline for the country's economy and social connectivity, has witnessed an alarming increase in traffic accidents in recent years. These accidents not only lead to the loss of human lives but also bring economic, social, and psychological hardships to families. Resolving this problem requires committed efforts and urgent actions. The Afghan caretaker government must promptly address the deteriorating condition

of the highway and bring important roads like the Kabul-Kandahar highway up to international standards. This route is not merely a passage for vehicles but a critical foundation for the country's economic activities. Any negligence in maintaining it directly affects the lives of the people and hinders the nation's development. Persistent poor road conditions, vehicle instability, and recurring traffic accidents not only damage the government's credibility but also adversely affect the mental well-being of the population. The enforcement of traffic laws must also be taken seriously. Drivers who violate these laws

should face strict penalties to set an example for others. Additionally, the technical inspection of vehicles should be rigorously enforced to ensure that vehicles with mechanical issues are not allowed on the roads. Reckless driving, overspeeding, and the lack of control over heavy vehicles must be closely monitored by the government. Expanding public awareness campaigns is another crucial step in addressing this issue. Educating people about the importance of traffic laws can help foster responsible behavior among drivers and passengers alike. The government must utilize

media platforms to raise public consciousness and promote a culture of road safety across all segments of society. Educational and training programs, specialized seminars on traffic regulations, and public announcements through media outlets can play a significant role in achieving this goal.

Preventing traffic accidents on the Kabul-Kandahar highway is not solely the government's responsibility; every individual in society must also play their part. If people adhere to laws and the government takes concrete steps to ensure road safety, this issue can be effectively addressed. Ensuring the safety of the Kabul-Kandahar

highway not only saves lives but also holds critical importance for the nation's economic progress. Moreover, the safety of this route is vital for Afghanistan's international reputation, as it serves as a crucial trade corridor for neighboring countries in the region.

This is a national necessity to save innocent lives, prevent tragedies, and pave the way for a secure and prosperous future for the country. The government must take immediate action to address this issue so that such incidents are not witnessed on any of the nation's highways in the years to come. Safeguarding the lives of Afghans and advancing the nation's development should be the cornerstone of all government policies and initiatives.

Afghanistan's Pomegranate Exports Hit \$33 Million, But Challenges Persist

The Ministry of Industry and Commerce reported that in the first eight months of the current solar year (1403), Afghanistan exported over \$33 million worth of pomegranates.

Akhundzada Abdul Salam Jawad, spokesperson for the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, stated that most pomegranate exports were sent to Pakistan, India, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, and the United Arab Emirates.

The spokesperson said: "Afghanistan exported approximately 63,000 tons of pomegranates over eight months in 1403, valued at \$33.3 million. The exports were made to countries including India, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Iraq, the UAE,



Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan."

Some orchard owners who traveled to Kabul from provinces to sell their pomegranate produce said that while pomegranate yields increased this year, the market for selling the fruit

remained sluggish.

Zia-ul-Haq, an orchard owner from Farah province, stated: "This year, our yields were high, but the problem is that there's no proper market for selling." Mohammad Zarif, another

orchard owner from Farah, said: "We paid 70,000 afghani in rent. The municipality charges 300 afghani per ton, there are seven to eight checkpoints along the way that collect 700 to 800 afghani, and transport costs us 1,000 afghani."

Meanwhile, some traders highlighted that due to trade challenges with Pakistan, pomegranate exports decreased this year. They urged the Islamic Emirate's officials to establish alternative trade routes and activate air corridors to boost exports.

Mohammad Agha Sadat, a trader, told TOLONews: "We can't even cover our expenses. One major issue is the low value of the Pakistani rupee, with 1,000 rupees equaling 240 afghani."

Special Courts...

of their retirement status, their pensions will be paid according to a scheduled timeline.

The deputy spokesperson said: "If the retiree is an employee of a non-budgetary unit, they must submit their application to the relevant department, and the special courts must respond to their request. Similarly, the Commission for Organizational Structure and Salary Management has been tasked with preparing a schedule to prevent budgetary pressure. The special courts will issue rulings based on this schedule." Retirees expressed satisfaction with the issuance of this decree, urging authorities to expedite the court proceedings to resolve their problems quickly. Nazifa, a retiree, told: "This is great news, and we are very happy. They should pay our pensions quickly because it's winter, and we have nothing at home."

Amirullah, another retiree, stated: "Justice must be served, and it should be determined who is eligible and who is not. We are even willing to go to the special court because we served honestly."

It is worth mentioning that in Hamal (solar calendar) of this year, the leader of the Islamic Emirate issued a decree instructing military and civilian institutions of the interim government not to deduct retirees' pensions from employees' monthly salaries.

According to statistics, the number of retirees in the country currently exceeds 150,000, with their annual pensions estimated to cost over 12 billion afghani.

Ministry: Afghanistan...

Except for diamonds, Afghanistan has all these stones, especially emeralds, rubies, and lapis lazuli, which are widely available," said Homayoun Afghan.

The Chamber of Commerce and Investment also emphasized the importance of creating sales markets and processing centers for exporting these precious stones.

"Establishing processing centers within the country and setting up trade markets and sales centers for these stones can help boost the economy," said Jan Aqa Nawid, the spokesperson for this chamber.

The Harm...

bioaccumulates in aquatic life. According to the EPA, fish can bioaccumulate PFOS at levels up to 4,000 times the concentration found in the water. For example, if a water sample shows 10 ppt of PFOS, the fish in that area might have 40,000 ppt in their flesh. In Misawa, the stream we tested leads to a fishing lake where locals fish. With 1,400 ppt of PFOS in the water, the fish are clearly at risk, even without testing them directly. That's the reality we're dealing with.

In Japan, people say, "It's just not fair. We're not allowed on the bases, and they're picking on us. We're like colonial subjects here in Japan, and the Americans are contaminating our water, poisoning us. There's nothing we can do."

GT: When you did your investigations, what obstacles did you face?

Elder: In Japan, the obstacles were numerous. I carried out testing and gave talks in 14 cities, and my message was clear: The US military is poisoning your water, your fish and your food. When I was getting ready to leave and head back to the US, I was at Osaka airport. As I was waiting to board, they called my name and I had to go to a special room. They told me they needed to examine me for explosives. This had also happened to me in Ireland seven years ago, after I had been speaking in Germany about the same issues. The airport security told me it was a random check, but it didn't feel random.

Another thing is, when I go to these bases, I talk to farmers, and get permission to access their property. I walk through the woods, and then I'd come across a large fence with barbed

wire, electric wiring, and signs that say, "If you come inside this fence, we can shoot you." I just wanted to take environmental samples and test the water. It's not really worth getting shot, so I stayed outside the bases. It was threatening in that regard.

Also, after I published a story about the Navy in August, I was no longer able to access Navy environmental sites, and I still can't today. They are apparently reading my IP address and blocking me.

GT: In a recent article, you said the US Navy has contaminated your blood. Could you provide more details? We rarely see reports on PFAS in the mainstream media in the US and Japan. Why?

Elder: Almost five years ago, I tested the water in my backyard. I live by the beach on Chesapeake Bay, and about 600 meters across the water is a Navy base where they use firefighting foam. The foam washes up on my beach every day, but at the time, I didn't know it was carcinogenic. I ate a lot of oysters, crabs and fish. That's how I ended up with high levels of PFAS in my blood.

I sent the story to the Washington Post, the New York Times and the Baltimore Sun. No one paid attention. I even gave them the scientific report. Only one outlet, Bay Journal, picked it up, and the reporter interviewed an official from Maryland's Department of the Environment. The quote from the Maryland official was: "If there is any PFAS in the water, it's probably from a landfill or a municipal firehouse."

Well, the landfill is 11 miles away, nowhere near the water. The firehouse is 5 miles away, also nowhere near the water.

The US Navy, however, is only 600 meters away, and it's well-documented that they used firefighting foam there for years. So, the state was clearly covering for the Navy.

I see the same thing in every nation: Japan, South Korea, Germany. Two years ago, very few people outside of experts with PhDs in universities had even heard of PFAS in Japan. The US has absolute control over Japan - not just militarily, but culturally as well. It seems that the US government has been able to control the thought by controlling the media. The media doesn't report on it, so people remain unaware.

GT: Victims of PFAS in the US and abroad are struggling to seek compensation from the US military. Why do you think it is that difficult to get justice?

Elder: The US military is deeply concerned with liability. An F-35 fighter jet costs about \$90 million to \$100 million. Many of the ballistic missiles they're setting up in Japan, pointed at China, also cost millions of dollars, and the stockpiling of those missiles costs billions.

If they start seriously addressing all the issues - liver cancer, kidney cancer, uterine cancer, testicular cancer, thyroid cancer - and begin to earnestly care for all the service members in the US military and the communities they've poisoned, then they won't have enough money left to build the missiles they are setting up which are pointed at China. Do you think it's any more difficult or complicated than that? They don't want to maximize the issue. They want to save face. These guys are masters of propaganda.

World's Largest...

the park was built using 300,000 cubic meters of ice and snow, incorporating elements inspired by the upcoming 2025 Harbin Asian Winter Games, which will open next February, right after China's Spring Festival holiday. It is also the first major international ice and snow event hosted by China since the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics. With an overall planned area

of 1 million square meters, up from last year's 800,000 square meters, the park is the largest in its 26-year history.

The park features nine major zones, recreating landmark landscapes of 42 countries and 3 regions that are members of the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) in the form of ice-and-snow structures that can be illuminated at night, including replicas of the Temple of Heaven in China, Osaka Castle

in Japan and the Taj Mahal in India. The main tower stands on the main axis of the park, featuring towering ice columns that depict the official emblem of the OCA. "The ice sculptures are incredibly exquisite. It's hard to imagine that they are made of ice blocks harvested from the Songhua River. Each piece of artwork showcases the superb craftsmanship of the artists," said Zhong Xueying, another tourist from Zhejiang.

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Trump Urges Ukraine and Russia to Prepare for Peace Agreement

U.S. President-elect Donald Trump has called on the presidents of Ukraine and Russia to take steps toward a peace agreement to end the ongoing war. In his latest remarks, Trump emphasized that the conflict, which began in 2022, has inflicted significant damage on Ukraine.

Trump also criticized President Joe Biden's decision to permit Ukraine to use American weapons in attacks on Russian territory. He expressed strong disapproval of this policy, hinting that he may revoke it once he assumes full authority as president.

"It is time for both leaders to prioritize peace and stop this devastating war that



continues to harm innocent lives and destabilize the region," Trump stated. The conflict between Ukraine and Russia has escalated over the years, drawing international condemnation and leading to severe humanitarian and economic consequences. Trump's comments have sparked debate among policymakers and analysts, with some questioning how his proposed approach might impact U.S. foreign relations and the broader geopolitical landscape. Observers are now watching closely to see how Trump's potential presidency might shape the trajectory of the Ukraine-Russia war and U.S. involvement in the conflict.

A look at the world

Putin Says Russia is Ready to Compromise with Trump on Ukraine War



Russian President Vladimir Putin said on Thursday that he was ready to compromise over Ukraine in possible talks with U.S. President-elect Donald Trump on ending the war and had no conditions for starting talks with the Ukrainian authorities.

Trump, a self-styled master of brokering agreements and author of the 1987 book "Trump: the Art of the Deal", has vowed to swiftly end the conflict, but has not yet given any details on how he might achieve that. Putin, fielding questions on state TV during his annual question and answer session with Russians, told a reporter for a U.S. news channel that he was ready to meet Trump, whom he said he had not spoken to for years. Asked what he might be able to offer Trump, Putin dismissed an assertion that Russia was in a weak position, saying that Russia had got much stronger since he ordered troops into Ukraine in 2022.

"We have always said that we are ready for negotiations and compromises," Putin said, after saying that Russian forces, advancing across the entire front, were moving towards achieving their primary goals in Ukraine.

"Soon, those Ukrainians who want to fight will run out, in my opinion, soon there will be no one left who wants to fight. We are ready, but the other side needs to be ready for both negotiations and compromises."

Reuters reported last month that Putin was open to discussing a Ukraine ceasefire deal with Trump, but ruled out making any major territorial concessions and insisted Kyiv abandon its ambitions to join NATO.

Putin said on Thursday that Russia had no conditions to start talks with Ukraine and was ready to negotiate with anyone, including President Volodymyr Zelenskiy. But he said any deal could only be signed with Ukraine's legitimate authorities, which for now the Kremlin considered to be only the Ukrainian parliament.

Zelenskiy, whose term was due to expire earlier this year but has been extended due to martial law... **P2**

World's Largest ICE-And-Snow Theme Park Opens on Winter Solstice in China's "City of Ice"

Gliding down an over-500-meter-long ice slide, Zhang Jijia felt like she was flying, and that her one-minute experience had been worth the hour-plus wait in line.

"It's super exciting. My heart soared with me," said Zhang, a tourist from east China's Zhejiang Province, after trying the Super Ice Slide at the iconic Harbin Ice-Snow



World, which kicked off its annual run on Saturday. The world's largest ice-and-snow theme park, the 26th edition of the Harbin Ice-Snow World, officially opened at 10 a.m. in Harbin, the capital of northeast China's Heilongjiang Province. also known as the "city of ice." Themed "Dream of Winter, Love among Asia... **P3**

Pakistan Dismisses US Official's Warning Over Missile Programme as Unfounded



Pakistan's Foreign Ministry on Saturday dismissed as unfounded and "devoid of rationality" assertions by a senior U.S. official that its missile programme could eventually pose a threat to the United States, Reuters reported. Earlier this week, U.S. Deputy National Security Adviser Jon Finer said Pakistan's development of long-range ballistic missiles made it an "emerging threat". Finer's comments, which came a day after Washington announced a new round of sanctions related to the ballistic missile programme, underscored the deterioration in once-close ties between Washington and Islamabad since the 2021 U.S. troop withdrawal from Afghanistan.

Addressing Finer's remarks, Pakistan's Foreign Ministry said the perception of an alleged threat was "unfortunate". "These allegations are unfounded, devoid of rationality and sense of history," the ministry added in a statement.

It also highlighted Pakistan's long history of cooperation with the U.S., particularly in counter-terrorism efforts, and reiterated its commitment to engaging constructively on all issues, including regional security and stability, read the report.



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